Social Services for Adults

How to get help if you are looking after someone

June 2003
In this leaflet the word "Carer" does not mean care workers or care staff who are paid to provide care as part of their contract.

I am looking after someone. Am I a carer?
Carers are people who look after a relative or friend who needs support because of age, physical or learning disability or illness, including mental illness. Is this you?

Parent carer
A parent carer is a parent of a disabled child. Carers will often see themselves as parents rather than carers, but their child will have additional care needs and may be entitled to additional services. Is this you?

Young carers
Young carers are under the age of 18. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a brother or sister, who needs support. Is this you?

Where can carers get help and support?
In the London Borough of Merton carers provide the majority of care in the home. Carers can be friends, family and even neighbours. We recognise the vital role played by carers. Social Services, the Health Service and voluntary sector organisations can all provide help, support and advice.
What kind of help is provided for carers?
Being a carer can be worrying and tiring; many people find they need support in order to manage. This leaflet outlines the main sorts of support that are available for carers and the people they care for.

Social Services provide a range of services which include:
¥ social worker: who can offer advice and support and arrange services if needed
¥ home care: personal care with practical support for the person you care for
¥ meals: meals can be delivered to the person you care for
¥ emergency call system: a home alarm system can be installed so that the person you look after can call for help in an emergency
¥ occupational therapists: can help with advice and equipment so that the person you look after can be as independent as possible
¥ getting a break: you may need a break from caring to enable you to have a few hours off or to have a break overnight. Social Services call this respite care. This may be for a few hours so that you have some free time to go shopping, visiting etc. It could be for longer, anything between a weekend and a fortnight. The person you care for could be supported at home, in a day centre, or in a residential or nursing home.
There are separate leaflets with more detailed information about the specialist services offered by Social Services. If you would like a copy of any of these leaflets please contact Social Services.

How do I get help for the person I am caring for

There are rules, called eligibility criteria, about who can and cannot get help from Social Services. To find out what someone needs and whether they qualify for help Social Services staff will meet with them. This meeting is called an assessment and we will arrange it for somewhere suitable for them and their circumstances. They can bring a friend or relative with them to the meeting, if they want to. The type of service they are offered will depend on their needs. After the meeting, they can expect to see a copy of the assessment of their needs and if they are offered a service, they can expect a copy, in writing, of the plan of how we aim to meet their needs. If they wish to see the records we keep about them, they have a right to do so.

Is there a charge for these services?

Usually, yes. Charges vary according to the service and ability to pay. There is a separate leaflet available called ’Charging for Social Services’
Can carers get help and support too?
If the eligibility criteria are met, see pages 5 and 6.
Carers are also entitled to an assessment in their own right, (even where the person cared for refuses an assessment) which will assess their own needs so that they can get support with caring. Your assessment will give you the opportunity to tell Social Services about the things that could make caring easier for you. We will want to talk about the way that caring affects your life. It might be useful to think about the things listed below before you come to the meeting:

¥ Do you get enough sleep?
¥ Is your health affected?
¥ Can you get out and about?
¥ Do you get time to yourself?
¥ Are your relationships affected?
¥ Do you want information about benefits?
¥ Are you worried that you may have to give up work?
¥ Is the person you care for getting enough help?

What sort of services may help you:
¥ Services that give you a break
¥ Emotional support from other carers
¥ Benefits advice
What happens if our needs change?
You can expect us to come back on a regular basis, to talk about the services we are arranging. We will assess whether your needs have changed and how well the services we are arranging are meeting your needs. If your needs have changed we may adjust the service you receive.

Carer’s Eligibility Criteria
1. Definition of Carer
The term carer is used in a variety of ways for the purpose of these eligibility criteria. It is defined as:

¥ Carers are people who look after a relative or friend who, because of disability, ill health or the effects of age, need help or support. They are unpaid.

¥ Carers can be partners, parents, elderly carers, young carers, family members, neighbours or someone identified by the person receiving care. They may or may not live in the same home as the person they are caring for.

There is no assumption that a ’main’ or ’primary’ carer is the only substantial and regular carer.
2. Definition of Care
Carer is defined in a wide ranging way including emotional and administrative support as well as physical and domestic tasks. Caring responsibilities may include regularly helping or supervising persons with everyday activities such as shopping, cooking, washing or bathing, dressing and providing emotional support and advocacy.

3. Impact Test
It is the impact of the caring role which will determine whether the carer is a substantial and regular carer and eligible for a carers’ assessment.
To be eligible for a carers’ assessment:
The Carer should be:-

a) over 16 years (under 16 years the carer will be assessed under the Children Act 1989) and

b) the cared for person must be over 18 years old. and

c) Merton Social Services must be satisfied that the cared for person is eligible for community care support within the agreed eligibility criteria and

d) The Carer should be providing both regular and substantial care.
Subject to these conditions, a carer is eligible for a service even if the cared for person refuses an assessment. The well-being of the carer should be taken into consideration.

Definitions

Regular Care
1. Carer in regular contact with the cared for person or
2. Provides short-term intensive care and support and
3. If no contact is provided by the carer, the cared for person would be at risk.

Substantial Care
1. Care (physical, personal and emotional support) is provided or is anticipated to be provided over a long period or
2. The cared for person has a chronic illness

Carer Well-being
1. Carer is at risk of harm / Abuse from the person for whom they are caring or
2. It is becoming more difficult for the carer to continue to provide care.
How do I get in touch with Social Services
For more information about services and assessments phone one of the numbers below.

Older People
Telephone: 020 8545 4360

Children & Families
Telephone: 020 8545 4226/7

People with mental health problems
Telephone: 020 8545 4490

People with learning disabilities
Telephone: 020 8545 4490

People with a physical impairment
Telephone: 020 8545 4493/94

People with a sensory impairment
Telephone: 020 8545 4493/94
Minicom: 020 8543 3212

Services for people with HIV
Telephone: 0208 545 4547
Sharing information
As we work in partnership with the Health Service and other agencies to provide a package of services, there is often a need to share your personal information with other organisations involved in your care. If necessary we may ask you to sign a form giving us permission to share your personal information with other organisations.

Helping us to help you
We welcome feedback about our services from the people who use them. If you have any comments, complaints or compliments about Social Services, or would like to see a copy of any records Social Services keep about you, please contact:

Customer Services Officer
Social Services, 3rd Floor
Merton Civic Centre,
FREEPOST SEA
London Road, Morden,
Surrey SM4 5QZ
Tel: 020 8545 3509 Fax: 020 8545 3637
website: www.merton.gov.uk/complaints
Where can I get more information?
For further advice and information contact Social Services or Care Connect.

Care Connect is a local information centre providing confidential, free and impartial information about the wide range of health and care services, available both locally and nationally, that are provided by social services, health care services voluntary organisations and private care agencies.

Care Connect
114 London Road
Morden
Surrey
SM4 5AX
Telephone:020 8543 5433
Fax:020 8543 8879
Textphone:020 8543 2685
Email:info@care-connect.info

Data protection
We will handle any personal information you provide in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will only use it for the purpose identified.
Useful contacts
www.ukonline.gov.uk
A new information service aimed at carers is available on this web site by clicking the Life Episodes button and selecting "looking after someone"

Department of Health Carers Web site
www.carers.gov.uk

Carers UK
General help and advice for all carers
Telephone: 0808 808 7777
www.carersonline.org.uk

Carers Support Merton (CSM) & Young Carers Project
The Vestry Hall
London Road
Mitcham
Surrey
CR4 3UD
Telephone: 020 8640 4159/6297
e-mail: csm@britishlibrary.net
Provides support for carers and information on services available to them locally and nationally. Produces carers’ fact sheet packs and quarterly newsletter. Identifies carers and raises awareness of their needs at policy level. Support worker helps carers of older people (the carer can be any age).

The Young Carers Project provides support and activities for young carers.

Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme Ltd.
The Vestry Hall
London Road
Mitcham
Surrey
CR4 3UD
Telephone:020 8685 9206
Email: manager@mertoncrossroads.org
Contact: Valerie Cova or Morag Holbrook

The scheme provides a home based service with trained care attendants to relieve carers of disabled people or those suffering from acute or long term illness. The service is available seven days a week to give carers a few hours to call their own. A stay awake all night service is available to offer carers undisturbed sleep one night a week. There is no charge for these services.
Merton MENCAP
Birches House
1 Birches Close
Cricket Green
Mitcham
CR4 4LB
Telephone: 020 8646 0965
Email: gcm89@dial.pipex.com
Merton MENCAP works on behalf of people with learning disabilities and their families to improve services and to change attitudes. A Family Support Worker provides information, advice and support to families.

Merton MIND
The Vestry Hall
London Road
Mitcham
Surrey
CR4 3UD
Telephone: 020 8648 6565
Email: merton.mind@virgin.net
Provides information and advice on all aspects of mental health and campaigns for increased public awareness.
For more information about local health, housing and social services and the standards you can expect from these services please see Merton’s ’Better Care, Higher Standards’ charter. You can get a copy of this charter from your local social services office or from Care Connect.

You can request further copies of this leaflet by telephoning 020 8545 4882.